

Bolton's fault lies up front

70/71

BIG MATCH
X-RAY by
Alan Williams

LUTON 2, BOLTON WANDERERS 0

NAT LOFTHOUSE, Bolton Wanderers team manager, said after this game: "Some day we are going to clout some team. I only hope I am there. The thing that let us down today was bad shooting."

I would agree with the "bad shooting," but whether Bolton will give some team a hiding in weeks to come — well, we'll have to wait and see.

It seems unlikely unless, of course, Nat himself dons a pair of boots, takes to the centre circle and produces some of the old Lofthouse magic of yesterday.

Bolton could never quite find the crispness up front which was the big feature of Luton's game in the first half.

It took Luton only nine minutes to get off the mark. From the first corner of the game, Nicholl rose high above the Bolton defence to head home.

Immediately afterwards, Malcolm Macdonald went close, and the irrepressible Don Givens closed in on the 'keeper, but a hasty clearance was made.

The kingpin was Givens, who found more than enough room and time to cope with Bolton's Charlie Hurley, who was often caught flat-footed.

Before the half-time whistle Givens and Macdonald only missed by inches, while a shot from Roger Hoy rebounded off the cross-bar.

ATTEMPTS

During one of Bolton's rare sorties John Byrom jiggered past two defenders, but the ball bounced away awkwardly and he was unable to get in a shot with just the 'keeper to beat.

Even in the second-half Bolton could never quite find the form which earned them a 4-2 win over Luton in the first game of the season.

Although Byrom made vain attempts to gain more of the ball, wingers Gordon Taylor and Paul Fletcher, never really had the beating of John Ryan and Alan Slough. And centre-forward John Manning was marked out of the game by Nicholl.

Byrom fluffed a couple of chances to reduce the arrears, and although the Bolton forward line moved better in the second-half to gain more of the ball — they could never match the effectiveness of their Luton counterparts.

With ten minutes to go John Ritson cleared off the line from a Keen header — and it was all over bar the shouting.

On this form, Luton looked good promotion contenders. A cautious Stock said afterwards: "A good win, but we got careless and nearly let Bolton through."

It won't be long before the

THREATS

This was the pattern in the first-half. Luton were much sharper, and while Chris Nicholl and John Moore coped easily with any Bolton threats, Mike Keen and Roger Hoy carved out possession in mid-field.

A steady stream of passes were fed to Jim Ryan, who with an overlap from his namesake, John Ryan, found little difficulty beating Syd Farrimond.

The second goal came from this type of move. Jim Ryan picked up the ball on the half-way line, drew the defender, laid it off to John Ryan who made a powerful cross to the near post, where Givens, with a dive and a flash of the head, had it in the net.

It was one of the best goals I've seen this season, executed with speed and efficiency.



● Don Givens dives full length to head home Luton's first goal. Bolton's John Hulme (right) looks on helplessly.

RATINGS (Points out of five) LUTON

Tony Read (3): A safe game under little pressure.
John Ryan (4): Inspired defensive and overlap work.
Alan Slough (3): Coped easily with Fletcher.
Roger Hoy (3): Tough and sure.
Chris Nicholl (4): Always in command, especially in the air.
John Moore (3): A good cover man.
Jim Ryan (4): Nearly al-

ways had the beating of his man.

David Court (3): Did a lot of work.

Malcolm Macdonald (4): Always dangerous.

Mike Keen (3): The brain behind many attacks.

Don Givens (5): A powerhouse in all departments.

BOLTON

Alan Boswell (3): Unsure under pressure.

John Ritson (2): Weak.

Syd Farrimond (2): Along with Ritson he must share

some of the blame for Luton's success.

Gareth Williams (3): Little effect.

Charlie Hurley (2): Couldn't cope with Givens.

John Hulme (3): A better second-half.

Paul Fletcher (3): Changed positions, but to little effect.

John Byrom (4): Always trying.

John Manning (2): Couldn't meet the demands.

Ron Phillips (3): Not a good game.

Gordon Taylor (2): Couldn't match the Luton wingers.



● Alan Boswell dives at the feet of Don Givens, as John Hulme lends a restraining hand